

**Merrimack School District/SAU 26**  
**School Board Meeting**  
**Preliminary Agenda**  
**October 7, 2024**  
**Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

- |           |   |                  |
|-----------|---|------------------|
| 6:00 p.m. | <b>1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>  | Lori Peters      |
| 6:05 p.m. | <b>2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>  | Lori Peters      |
|           | <b>3. RECOGNITIONS</b>  | Lori Peters      |
| 6:15 p.m. | <b>4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES</b>   | Lori Peters      |
|           | a. Superintendent Update  |                  |
|           | b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update   |                  |
|           | c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update   |                  |
|           | d. School Board Update  |                  |
|           | e. Student Representative Update  |                  |
| 6:30 p.m. | <b>5. OLD BUSINESS</b>  | Lori Peters      |
|           | a. Review of New Hampshire School Board Resolutions   | Lori Peters      |
| 6:50 p.m. | <b>6. NEW BUSINESS</b>  | Lori Peters      |
|           | a. Electronic Hall Pass Program   | Chrigus Boezeman |
|           | b. Approval of MMS and MHS Parent/Student Handbooks   | Everett Olsen    |
|           | c. October 1, 2024 Student Enrollments  | Everett Olsen    |
|           | d. Other  |                  |
| 7:20 p.m. | <b>7. POLICIES</b>  | Lori Peters      |
|           | a. Third Review and Approval of Field Trip and Excursion Policy (IJOA) and Field Trip and Excursion Procedures (IJOA-R) |                  |
|           | b. First Reading of Revised Limited English Proficiency Instruction Policy(IHBBA)                                       |                  |
| 7:30 p.m. | <b>8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>   | Lori Peters      |
|           | a. September 23, 2024 Public Minutes  |                  |
| 7:35 p.m. | <b>10. CONSENT AGENDA</b>   | Amanda Doyle     |
|           | a. Educator Nomination  |                  |
| 7:40 p.m. | <b>11. OTHER</b>  | Lori Peters      |
|           | a. Committee Reports  |                  |
|           | b. Correspondence   |                  |
|           | c. Comments   |                  |
| 7:50 p.m. | <b>12. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS</b>  | Lori Peters      |
| 8:00 p.m. | <b>13. ADJOURN</b>  |                  |

\* These times are estimates and may vary depending on discussion.



## New Hampshire School Boards Association

---

*Barrett M. Christina, Executive Director*  
*Matt Pappas, President, Rochester*  
*Holly Kennedy, Past-President, Hinsdale*

*25 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 101*  
*Concord, NH 03301*  
*Phone: (603) 228-2061*  
*www.nhsba.org*

### **2024 NHSBA Delegate Assembly** **Saturday October 19, 2024** **10:30am** **Grappone Conference Center**

### **PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS**

#### **13. Submitted by the Hanover & Dresden School Boards**

##### **Proposed Resolution:**

Whereas all children deserve to be safe in New Hampshire schools; and

Whereas public education strives to encourage tolerance, acceptance, inquiry, and curiosity; and

Whereas all children deserve the opportunity to participate in school based extracurricular activities, including sports teams; and

Whereas several school districts in New Hampshire have already adopted inclusive transgender student policies; and

Whereas the state of New Hampshire has previously enacted anti-discrimination laws in 2018 protecting transgender people from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and schools;

Therefore be it resolved that the NHSBA supports and advocates for statewide legislation and local school board policy that affirms the rights of all students to participate in education including school sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities, free of discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

**Rationale:**

The rights of public school students are currently at risk because of some of the legislation under consideration in Concord, and this resolution is both critical and timely.

**NHSBA Response:**

The NHSBA Board of Directors believes that this Proposed Resolution is similar to Resolution VI:F, which was adopted in 2021. VI:F currently reads:

*VI:F• NHSBA supports equity and inclusion in all aspects of education. NHSBA supports adherence to all anti-discrimination laws, rules and statutes ensuring that no student is excluded or discriminated against on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, religious creed, color, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin, economic status, familial status, sexual orientation, health condition, or native language. (January 2021)*

**Alternative Resolution Recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors:**

VI:F• NHSBA supports equity and inclusion in all aspects of education, **including curricular programs, extra-curricular programs and co-curricular programs.** NHSBA supports adherence to all anti-discrimination laws, rules and statutes ensuring that no student is excluded or discriminated against on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, religious creed, color, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin, economic status, familial status, sexual orientation, health condition, or native language. (January 2021)

**NHSBA Rationale:** NHSBA Resolution VI:F already speaks to NHSBA's support for equity, inclusion and anti-discrimination laws. This Resolution also includes all classes protected under state law. The NHSBA Board of Directors believes the Alternative Resolution reaches the stated goal of the proposed resolution without singling- out one of the protected classes.

#### **14. Submitted by the Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative School Board**

##### **Proposed Resolution:**

The New Hampshire School Board Association will ensure that NHSBA member dues are not being used for lobbying purposes consistent with RSA 15:5.

##### **Rationale:**

The resolution simply seeks to follow the statute. If member school boards do not segregate funds when paying NHSBA membership dues, thus co-mingling state and non-state funds, then those membership dues cannot be used for lobbying purposes as stated in RSA 15:5.

##### **NHSBA Response:**

✓ **Adoption NOT recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors.**

*First:* The Board of Directors believes the objective of the proposal is not appropriate for a Resolution. NHSBA Resolutions are intended to guide NHSBA's positions relative to legislative advocacy, while this resolution would seek to direct the internal operation of NHSBA relative to its membership.

*Second:* The resolution would require NHSBA to somehow monitor or audit the accounts and expenditures of its member districts.

*Third:* The premise is based upon an open question statutory interpretation.

RSA 15:5 states:

I. Except as provided in paragraph II, no recipient of a grant or appropriation of state funds may use the state funds to lobby or attempt to influence legislation, participate in political activity, or contribute funds to any entity engaged in these activities.

II. Any recipient of a grant or appropriation of state funds that wishes to engage in any of the activities prohibited in paragraph I, or contribute funds to any entity engaged in these activities, shall segregate the state funds in such a manner that such funds are physically and financially separate from any non-state funds that may be used for any of these purposes. Mere bookkeeping separation of the state funds from other moneys shall not be sufficient.

Relative to Paragraph I, NHSBA maintains that the Association is not subject to Paragraph I, as NHSBA is not a "recipient of a grant or appropriation of state funds."

Relative to Paragraph II, RSA 15:5 became law in 2006. A review of the legislative history includes no information that would indicate that paragraph II was intended to apply (1) absent a primary object of the payment to "lobby or attempt to influence legislation" by the third-party entity, or (2) when the entity's positions are not directed or even chosen by the recipient of the state funds (i.e., an individual school district/board).



In this regard, NHSBA is not different than any other entity – whether for profit or not-for-profit - which receives payments from a district and which spends some of its revenue on attempts to influence legislation.

Additionally, and despite the fact that public employee/officer organizations such as NHSBA were funded in the same manner as NHSBA is in the present day, NHSBA is not aware of any instance since this statute became law when the bills' sponsors asserted that RSA 15:5 was intended to apply to organizations such as NHSBA.

Nothing precludes school boards from segregating funds for NHSBA dues. Consistent with limitations on NHSBA's legal services, NHSBA recommends that boards consult with their own local legal counsel for an interpretation of RSA 15:5, II. If a local board chooses to segregate funds, the board should consult with local counsel, along with the superintendent, business administrator and district auditor to best determine how that should be accomplished. Local counsel should be involved to ascertain whether this statute would also apply to other professional organizations/associations, vendors, contractors, or other entities engaged in legislative advocacy.

**15. Submitted by the Governor Wentworth School Board**

**Proposed Resolution:**

The GWRSD School Board tonight voted unanimously to support and in so doing reaffirm the current NHSBA resolution.

My motion;

I move the GWRSD School Board vote to support and reaffirm the current NHSBA resolution which reads "NHSBA supports that the state and federal government seek and provide viable, sustainable, permanent funding to provide a school breakfast and lunch at no cost to students."

Now reflected in the minutes, during public portion of the meeting, and recorded by Wolfeboro Community Television.

**Rationale:**

N/A

**NHSBA Response:** Though this is not a proposed resolution, per se, the NHSBA Board of Directors thanks the Governor Wentworth School Board for their continued support. If Continuing Resolution #2 passes, it will become a permanent Resolution in the NHSBA Statement of Beliefs Manual.

## **16. Submitted by the Concord School Board**

### **Proposed Resolution:**

The board voted 8-0 to send the following proposed resolution regarding universal free lunch to the NHSBA: (Motioned by Mr. Weinberg, 2nd by Mr. Cotton).

1. "Whereas the Concord School Board recognizes the importance of nutrition for supporting the development and learning potential of New Hampshire students.
2. Whereas the Concord School Board believes it is critical to tackle childhood hunger and food insecurity.
3. Therefore, we submit a resolution to the NHSBA to advocate to the NH State Legislature to create a universal and subsidized meal program for NH public school students."

### **Rationale:**

Support for the issues concerning food insecurity

The Concord Board is committed to ensuring that all children receive nutritious meals while at school. In seeking support from the state to fund breakfast and lunches, the Board offers the following rational.

The Board acknowledges that every student needs to start the day with a healthy breakfast and a healthy lunch to sustain learning throughout the day

Schools in the city of Concord have a significant number of students with food insecurity. The district faced a deficit in revenues from the food service program due to the inability of families to afford the meal program

The district provides breakfast and lunch to students attending summer programs at the school.

The board realizes that not all families fill out the required paperwork for a variety of reasons, having state support would lessen the burden of filing the application

**NHSBA Response:** This Proposed Resolution is similar to Continuing Resolution #2. However, the NHSBA Board of Directors believes that a slight amendment to CR#2 is warranted and necessary, consistent with this Proposed Resolution. Continuing Resolution currently states:

*NHSBA supports that the state and federal government seek and provide viable, sustainable, permanent funding to provide a school breakfast and lunch at no cost to students. (2022)*

**Alternative Resolution Recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors:**

NHSBA supports that the state and federal government seek and provide viable, sustainable, permanent funding to provide a school breakfast and lunch at no cost to students **and at no cost to local school districts.** (2022)

**NHSBA Rationale:** Continuing Resolution #2 only addresses providing school meals to students at no cost. Over the last number of years, the New Hampshire Legislature has passed numerous laws with unfunded mandates passed down to local school districts. This proposed Alternative Resolution clarifies that any school funding programs should also be at cost to local school districts and should not be an unfunded mandate.

## **17. Submitted by the Concord School Board**

### **Proposed Resolution:**

Concord Board of Education Resolution  
For Gun Free School Zones

A RESOLUTION of the Concord Board of Education in Concord, New Hampshire supports New Hampshire State Legislation that will enforce the Federal Gun Free School Zone Act.

WHEREAS, the Concord Board of Education has an obligation to ensure that all students are provided a safe, secure, and supportive environment in which education and school activities are conducted; and

WHEREAS, legislators are accountable to create a safe or unsafe environment in our schools, as evidenced by increasing incidents of gun violence threats and gun violence in schools; and

WHEREAS, so far this year in 2024, the United States has experienced 88 incidents of shooting in schools with 78 victims of these shootings; and

WHEREAS, the presence of firearms increases risk of such harm; and

WHEREAS, the Concord Board of Education policies #544 prohibits weapons including firearms on school properties unless under the control of law enforcement personnel; and

WHEREAS the federal government has designated schools as gun-free zones; and

WHEREAS, the federal Gun Free Schools Act prohibits students from bringing firearms into schools, and the federal Gun Free Schools Zone Act prohibits all other persons from bringing firearms within 1,000 feet of school property; and  
WHEREAS, any bill set before New Hampshire Legislators that does not enforce federal law of gun free school zones, compromises the ability to maintain a safe environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

The Concord Board of Education:

- Opposes current New Hampshire state law that does not require state and local law enforcement to enforce federal law of gun free school zones.
- Urges all City of Concord's elected representatives serving in the New Hampshire State Legislature to pass legislation to keep firearms out of school zones.
- Urges New Hampshire State Legislature to pass a bill that enforces federal Gun Free School and Gun Free School Zone Acts in order to create and maintain a safe education environment.

- Commits to creation and revision of Concord School District policies that prohibit students, staff, and civilians from bringing firearms within a school zone.
- Directs the Concord School District Superintendent to distribute this resolution to city, state, and local policy makers, all members of the State Board of Education (New Hampshire); New Hampshire State School Board Association; New Hampshire Association of School Administrators; New Hampshire State Teachers Association; local print, voice, and internet media.

Adopted the day of 2024, the Concord Board of Education voted at a dully called meeting at which a quorum was present with in favor, opposed, and abstained from the Resolution.

**Resources:**

K-12 School Shooting Database; <https://k12ssdb.org/>

Concord School District Policy #544 Weapons on School Property NH RSA 192 D:2  
Federal Gun Free School Zone Act 1990 Federal Gun Free Schools Act 1994

**Rationale:**

Support for issues concerning weapons in the schools

The Concord Board of Education is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children and staff and in doing so supports a gun free school zone. The Board offers the following rational.

The rules that apply to students attending schools should apply to adults who enter school grounds.

The Board was faced with a situation when adults (some carrying weapons) were using a school facility over a weekend at the same time students were in the building at an event. Students observed the adults carrying a weapon and sent panic among the students and parents. The situation was quickly resolved but not without heightened anxiety on the part of students.

The district receives federal funds to support school programs and is cognizant of the rules around the Federal “Safe and Gun Free Zones” and yet NH laws allow for concealed weapons as well as open carry.

**NHSBA Response:** NHSBA has two resolutions relative to guns and firearms on school grounds.

Continuing Resolution #4 states: *“NHSBA will advocate for legislative action that ensures local school boards comply with federal firearm laws and policies.”* (2022)

Resolution VI:G• states *“NHSBA supports legislation to restrict possession of firearms on school property, limiting possession to certified police officers only.”* (2020)

This Proposed Resolution is different, however, as it speaks to local law enforcement enforcing federal law regarding firearms on school grounds

**Alternative Resolution Recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors:**

VI:G• NHSBA supports legislation to restrict possession of firearms on school property, limiting possession to certified police officers only. **NHSBA further supports state legislation that would allow enforcement of the federal Gun Free School Zones Act within New Hampshire.**

## **18. Submitted by the Oyster River School Board**

### **Proposed Resolution:**

II:E• NHSBA proposes that the state develop an equitable and sustainable tax plan dedicated solely to education for the purpose of fully funding a constitutionally adequate education for all students in the state. (2002)

*Proposed resolution amendment, edit in bold italics:*

II:E• NHSBA proposes that the state develop an equitable and sustainable tax plan dedicated solely to ***public*** education for the purpose of fully funding a constitutionally adequate education for all students in the state.

### **Rationale:**

Recent legislation and rule interpretation by the state continue to complicate the ability of school districts to fund a constitutionally required adequate education. Recent court rulings (ConVal vs. State of NH, Rand vs. State of NH) reiterate this requirement to form a tax plan and the continued failure of the legislature to do so. This lack is creating a significant and negative educational and financial impact on public school districts and local taxpayers. Therefore it is timely to make a small edit to NHSBA policy II:E to reinforce that NHSBA not only supports an equitable and sustainable tax plan to fund education, but that the tax plan should support PUBLIC education rather than private and/or parochial education. This also allows policy II:E to more fully coincide with policy I:B, which opposes the creation of vouchers (Education Freedom Accounts) and other programs that funnel tax dollars away from public schools into private and parochial schools.

### **NHSBA Response:**

The NHSBA Board of Directors supports the intent and purpose of this Proposed Resolutions, with minor modifications.

### **Alternative Resolution Recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors:**

II:E• NHSBA proposes that the state develop an equitable and sustainable tax plan dedicated solely to ***public schools operated by local school districts*** ~~education~~ for the purpose of fully funding a constitutionally adequate education for all students in the state.

**NHSBA Rationale:** The NHSBA Board of Directors believes that the alternative language clarifies that education funding be directed at public schools operated by local school districts, lest there be any confusion or misunderstanding as to what constitutes “public education.”



## **19. Submitted by the Oyster River School Board**

### **Proposed Resolution:**

The NHSBA does not support the proposed revisions to State Administrative Rule ED 306, document #10556, as amended on 3/27/2024.

### **Rationale:**

The proposed revisions to State Administrative Rule ED 306, as of 3/27/2024, are problematic, inadequate, and unclear in multiple areas. The proposed rule changes conflict with multiple areas of standing NHSBA policies, resolutions, and statements of belief, including but not limited to:

I:B (moving tax dollars away from public schools);

II:N and II:U (unfunded mandates and fiscal impact);

V:K, V:M, and V:N (all regarding various aspects of local control, including standards, assessment and accountability);

VI:F (equity and inclusion for students) and VI:H (diversity, equity and inclusion within curriculum);

VIII:H (decreases in content and skills tested).

The proposed revisions also can be interpreted as affecting adequate funding by shifting educational requirements to options, which significantly complicates budgeting and aspects of local control. Local control itself is challenged in the draft by limiting language allowed in crafting policies as well as altering how a credit can be earned, which are typically under local school board purview. Standards are weakened by changing “mastery” to “proficiency” in meeting competencies, where “proficiency” is now defined as a minimum requirement as opposed to a high requirement. There are also multiple changes, such as changing “instructional” to “learning”, and “teaching” to “facilitating learning” that lessens the importance of classroom learning. Highly qualified and credentialed professional teachers are paramount in providing quality education; eliminating or weakening teacher preparation and licensure is a disservice to students and society and compromises the quality of the diploma issued by the school district.

Due to these and other issues and areas of concern, the NHSBA should not support the proposed revisions to ED 306 as of 3/27/2024 (5/28/2024 proposed revisions have not yet been approved at this date).

✓ **Adoption NOT recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors.**

**NHSBA Rationale:** Not support. On Wednesday August 14, 2024, the State Board adopted the new minimum standards, rendering this Proposed Resolution moot.

**20. Submitted by the Oyster River School Board and Cosponsor of the Hanover/Dresden Resolution Submitted Above**

**Proposed Resolution:**

Whereas all children deserve to be safe in New Hampshire schools; and

Whereas public education strives to encourage tolerance, acceptance, inquiry, and curiosity; and

Whereas all children deserve the opportunity to participate in school based extracurricular activities, including sports teams; and

Whereas several school districts in New Hampshire have already adopted inclusive transgender student policies; and

Whereas the state of New Hampshire has previously enacted anti-discrimination laws in 2018 protecting transgender people from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and schools;

Therefore be it resolved that the NHSBA supports and advocates for statewide legislation and local school board policy that affirms the rights of all students to participate in education including school sponsored curricular and co-curricular activities, free of discrimination on the basis of gender identity.

**NHSBA Response:** This Proposed Resolution is the same as Proposed Resolution #13, above. The NHSBA Board of Directors response is the same to this Proposal as it was to Proposed Resolution #13.

**Alternative Resolution Recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors:**

VI:F• NHSBA supports equity and inclusion in all aspects of education, including curricular programs, extra-curricular programs and co-curricular programs. NHSBA supports adherence to all anti-discrimination laws, rules and statutes ensuring that no student is excluded or discriminated against on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, religious creed, color, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin, economic status, familial status, sexual orientation, health condition, or native language. (January 2021)

**NHSBA Rationale:** NHSBA Resolution VI:F already speaks to NHSBA's support for equity, inclusion and anti-discrimination laws. This Resolution also includes all classes protected under state law. The NHSBA Board of Directors believes the Alternative Resolution reaches the stated goal of the proposed resolution without singling-out a single protected class.

**21. Submitted by the Hooksett School Board**

### **Context**

NH state law provides a framework for school impact fees to be established for new residential development/construction via RSA 674:21 which specifically refers to “public school facilities”. Local zoning ordinances specify criteria for the assignment of fees to new construction, collection of fees from developers, retention of these fees, and the criteria for school districts to be eligible to receive these fees as revenue to offset expenses for facilities construction or improvement. In some communities, ordinances or Planning Board areas of focus are oriented towards municipal projects, and school district concerns may be inadequately considered.

### **Proposed Resolution**

NHSBA will advocate for laws governing impact fees to be updated to require local Planning Boards to revisit impact fee methodology, policy, and schedule at least every five years, to ensure local ordinances reflect legislative or rule changes and consider other local factors and school district concerns.

✓ **Adoption recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors.**

**NHSBA Rationale:** Impact fees stand to have a significant effect on school board budgeting, facilities planning, and school capital improvement plans. The NHSBA Board of Directors believes that by supporting and advocating for this Resolution, school boards will have better stability, uniformity and financial planning as it comes to school district facilities and infrastructure.

**22. Submitted by the Mascoma Valley Regional School Board on 8/3/2024**

**Proposed Resolution:**

NHSBA will support legislation that requires the State of New Hampshire to fund the cost of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey for all middle school students in the state.

**Rationale:**

Currently, the state of New Hampshire covers the cost for school districts to survey students for the Youth Risk Behavior Survey from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. This biannual, anonymous survey provides valuable information to school districts, health councils, and communities so they may be able to address underlying issues facing young people such as drug use, suicidal thoughts, self-harm, eating disorders, dating violence, abuse, bullying, vaping, addiction, and so much more. This survey is often the only way adults are able to understand the issues facing young people today because of its widespread use nationwide in an anonymized fashion. Currently, New Hampshire only funds the high school survey, leaving school districts having to fund a middle school survey themselves. An age-appropriate middle school survey is currently funded by our neighbors in Maine and Vermont, giving their communities better information to address problem behaviors earlier and build stronger risk prevention strategies by the time these students enter high school.

**NHSBA Response:**

✓ **Adoption NOT recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors.**

**NHSBA Rationale:** The NHSBA Board of Directors recognizes and appreciates the Mascoma Valley Regional School Board's interest and stated desire to address problem behaviors earlier and build stronger risk prevention strategies by the time these students enter high school. However, the Board of Directors also believes that local school districts should undertake the Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey on their own volition, lest it be another mandate from the state and another task levied upon our school district staff.

**23. Submitted by the Keene School Board the on 8/5/2024**

**Proposed Resolution:**

NHSBA urges the New Hampshire Legislature to repeal all laws that usurp local control in regard to materials found in public school libraries. Further, NHSBA urges the New Hampshire Legislature to repeal all laws that usurp local control in regard to materials used to teach the curriculum established by the New Hampshire Legislature, New Hampshire Department of Education and local school boards.

**Rationale:**

It is our belief that our local school boards are best suited to deal with the expectations of the communities they serve and the staff they hire.

**NHSBA Response:**

√ Adoption NOT recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors.

**NHSBA Rationale:** NHSBA currently has two Continuing Resolutions that speak to this matter.

Continuing Resolution #5 states: *NHSBA opposes any legislations that divests local school boards of original jurisdiction relative to complaints about local curriculum, instruction, and instructional resources such as books, library materials, and other instructional resources. Further, NHSBA opposes any legislation that subjects school district staff to civil lawsuits and sanctions relative to curriculum and instruction. (2023)*

Continuing Resolution #6 states: *NHSBA affirms the qualifications of school district staff to research and select appropriate digital and printed material for schools. Literary and curricular collections should offer students information that provides a balance of cultural values. Further, literary collections should represent diverse points of view; provide a global perspective; stimulate essential thinking skills; and meet the interests, abilities, learning styles, and information needs of the learning community. (2023)*

The NHSBA Board of Directors believes these two Continuing Resolutions are related enough to the Proposed Resolution such that another resolution on the same topic is not necessary.

**24. Submitted by the Keene School Board the on 8/5/2024**

**Proposed Resolution:**

NHSBA opposes state laws that require mandatory reporting by teachers and staff to parents and guardians of conversations teachers and staff (including counseling, therapy, and school psychology) have with a student regarding the student's own status as a member of any protected class.

**Rationale:**

It is difficult enough to find and retain good teachers and staff, and mandatory reporting of non-criminal issues is a psychological and emotional burden to students and staff, violates confidentiality, and is an affront to professional ethics.

**NHSBA Response:** Support alternative language.

**Alternative Resolution Recommended by NHSBA Board of Directors:**

NHSBA supports legislation which prioritizes the well-being and safety of students and, while recognizing the rights of parents to make decisions about their children, also gives due consideration and weight to educators' professional judgment and their responsibility under the Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators to always act in a student's best interests.

**Rationale:** The Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators contains the following provisions:

- Educators are expected to have an awareness and respect of the confidential nature of material received and communicated from a variety of audiences.
- Educators are expected to recognize and respect confidential information acquired in the course of employment regarding individual student safety, education, health, and personal information of students and their families.

The NHSBA Board of Directors believes that the proposed Alternative Resolution addresses the intent of the proposed Resolution while simultaneously addresses the responsibilities of teachers and school staff under the Code of Ethics for New Hampshire Educators.



**MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT**

School Administrative Unit #26  
36 McElwain Street  
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054  
Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

**AMANDA S. DOYLE**  
*Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum*

**EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.**  
Chief Education Officer

**MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL**  
*Assistant Superintendent for Business*

**To:** Lori Peters  
Jenna Hardy

Naomi Halter  
Ken Martin  
Laurie Rothhaus

**From:** Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

**Date:** October 3, 2024

---

**Subject: Three Year Enrollment Trend**

As we approach our work on the development of the Fiscal 2026 school budget request, I am presenting to you our PreK-12 enrollments over the last 3 years. New Hampshire RSA 189:28 requires school districts to report district enrollments as of October 1st of each school year. Over the last 3 years our PreK-12 enrollment has declined by 124 students. This trend is consistent with a statewide decline in public school enrollment. Most demographic studies have found that the decline in enrollment across New Hampshire is due to our aging population and declining birth rates. New Hampshire has the second lowest birth rate in the country at 8.8 births per 1,000 population. An additional contributing factor to our enrollment decrease since 2022 is the increase (23 students) in students being homeschooled.

I have included a brief summary of a research report drafted by Urbanomics of Portsmouth, NH. The company has recently studied the relationships between housing development and school enrollment. Merrimack was one of four school districts in New Hampshire that participated in their study. I look forward to discussing this with you on Monday evening.



**Merrimack School District  
3 Year Enrollment Trend  
October 1, 2022, 2023, 2024**

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>3 Year Change</b>
<b>Pre K</b>	131	110	105	
<b>K</b>	248	267	239	
<b>1</b>	265	269	266	
<b>2</b>	239	267	265	
<b>3</b>	263	237	269	
<b>4</b>	<u>272</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>239</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,418</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>1,383</b>	<b>-35</b>
<b>5</b>	245	272	261	
<b>6</b>	<u>249</u>	<u>237</u>	<u>272</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>+39</b>
<b>7</b>	276	242	237	
<b>8</b>	<u>269</u>	<u>269</u>	<u>242</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>-66</b>
<b>9</b>	277	262	258	
<b>10</b>	265	273	257	
<b>11</b>	279	260	268	
<b>12</b>	<u>297</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>273</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>-62</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,575</b>	<b>3,529</b>	<b>3,451</b>	<b>-124</b>
<b>Out of District</b>	20	20	20	0
<b>Home School</b>	116	130	139	+23



# FROM HOMES TO CLASSROOMS

The Relationship Between  
Housing Development and  
School Enrollment  
in New Hampshire

SEPTEMBER 2024

PREPARED BY URBANOMICS  
FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
HOUSING

# FROM HOMES TO CLASSROOMS

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

SEPTEMBER 2024

---

### REPORT PREPARED BY URBANOMICS FOR NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING

**GEORGE REAGAN**—Director of Community Engagement  
**SARAH WRIGHTSMAN**—Manager of Community Engagement  
and Education

**HEATHER MCCANN**—Senior Director,  
Research, Engagement, and Policy

**BEN FROST, AICP**—Deputy Executive Director & Chief Legal Officer

For questions about this report and press inquiries:  
[info@nhhfa.org](mailto:info@nhhfa.org)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHRIS NORWOOD—Portsmouth, Chair  
SARAH MARCHANT—Brookline, Vice Chair  
DEREK FERLAND—Claremont  
DONNA MARSH—Stratham  
TRICIA MORIN—Hopkinton  
ANTHONY POORE—Manchester  
MICHAEL SCALA—Rochester  
MICHAEL SKELTON—Bedford  
EVELYN WHELTON—Madison

**ROB DAPICE**—Executive Director / CEO



PO Box 5087, Manchester, NH 03108

603.472.8623 · [info@nhhfa.org](mailto:info@nhhfa.org)

**NHHousing.org**

NH Housing is a self-supporting public corporation whose mission is to promote, finance, and support housing solutions for the people of the New Hampshire.



# Section 1.

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The relationship between housing development and school enrollment in New Hampshire communities has been a contentious subject in cities and towns around the state for decades.

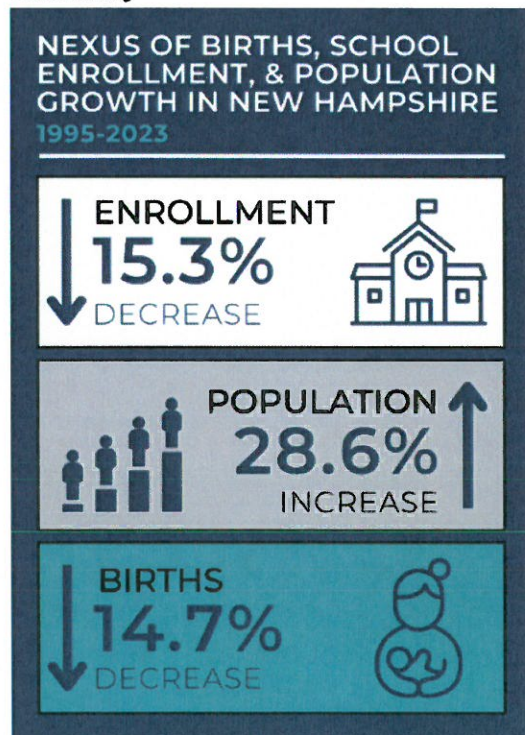
To assess this relationship, NH Housing engaged the research firm Urbanomics to review previous housing and school enrollment studies, delve into current school data and state demographics, and conduct case studies of four New Hampshire communities, focusing on the effect of new housing construction.

### Study Purpose

This study sought to determine if there has been a change in the findings of similar studies conducted in the past 20 years that examined the impact of population growth and new housing development.

### Key Findings

#### Summary



Past studies have found that there has been little correlation between new housing development and increases in school enrollment. However, public concern that new housing will burden municipal and school district budgets persists.

This present study, *From Homes to Classrooms: The Relationship Between Housing Development and School Enrollment in New Hampshire*, corroborates the findings of past studies. It is based on extensive research, community case studies, an examination of residential and commercial tax bases in the state, and data on housing construction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Applied Economic Research. (2004). *New residential development and school enrollment: Just the facts*. New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority.

## Detailed Findings

### *Public School Students per Housing Unit*

1. The study shows a general decline in the ratio of public school students per housing unit in New Hampshire since 1990, decreasing from 0.39 to 0.29 students per unit statewide.
2. In four community case studies communities (Deerfield, Dover, Dunbarton, and Merrimack), there were even lower ratios, with an average of 0.25 students per unit.
3. Across communities, student-per-unit ratios varied, with higher ratios observed in areas characterized by single-family housing and higher rates of homeownership.
4. Higher-cost housing tended to have slightly fewer students per unit.

### *Net Fiscal Impacts of Housing on School Districts<sup>2</sup>*

#### **New Construction**

##### *Key Trends Among the Case Study Communities as a Whole*

5. Housing built from 2014 to 2023 (“new units”) generated net fiscal benefits to local school districts at an average of \$1,711 per unit; older housing (built in 2013 or earlier) yielded a modest net value<sup>3</sup> of \$190 per unit to local school districts.
6. All housing types (single-family, multifamily rentals, condos, and manufactured housing) generated positive net value, with the largest returns being for condo units (\$4,739 per unit). There was little difference in returns for single-family or multifamily rentals (\$1,357 and \$1,382 per unit). It is worth mentioning that an analysis of individual case study communities (items 9 and 10) found that net value trends by housing type varied for individual case studies.
7. Due to the difference in property values, higher-cost housing generated very large net benefits compared with lower-cost housing (\$3,508 and \$661 per unit, respectively).
8. Higher-density housing, whether in the form of condos or multifamily rentals, generated far greater net benefits on a per-acre basis than single-family housing.

##### *Differences Among Case Study Communities*

9. Because Dover and Merrimack accounted for approximately 90% of the housing units in the case study communities, distinct variations among the individual communities were not evident in the overall analysis. These variations were influenced by factors such as property assessment practices for new and older construction, demographics, and land use characteristics.
10. Two case study communities, Dover and Merrimack, had greater diversity of housing types built and showed net benefits from new residential construction activity (\$2,406 and \$1,572 per unit, respectively).
11. Deerfield and Dunbarton, both small towns that rely primarily on a residential tax base and whose new units were primarily single-family non-condo units, generated negative net benefits of -\$775 and -\$599 per new construction unit, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Fiscal impacts were assessed for local school districts only. Other local and state tax revenues and expenditures were excluded from this analysis.

<sup>3</sup> Net benefits or net value refers to the additional tax revenue generated for school districts after deducting the cost of educational services.



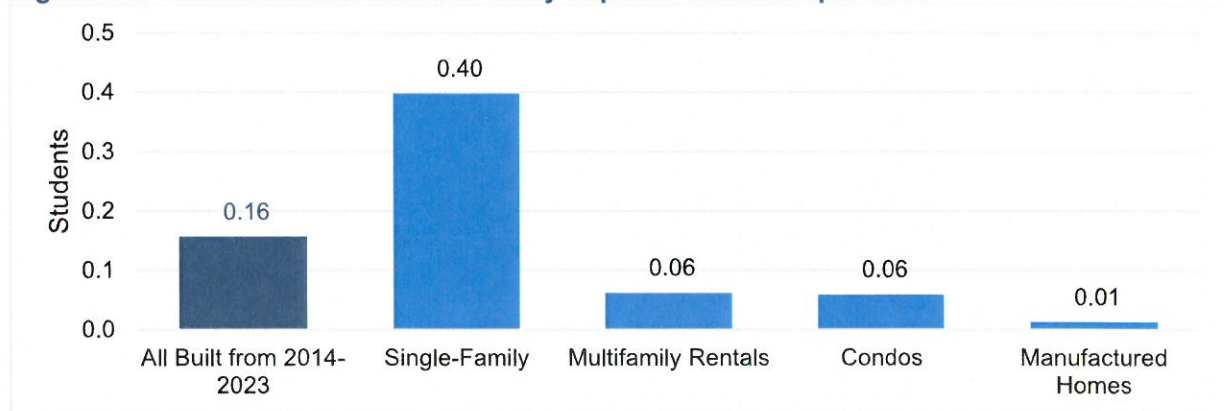
## All Construction Years

12. Looking at all the housing stock in the case study communities, net values were positive at an average of \$255 per unit.
13. Condos had the highest net value at \$990 per unit, followed by single-family homes (\$190 per unit), manufactured homes (\$92 per unit), and multifamily rentals (\$73 per unit).
14. Lower-cost housing<sup>4</sup> had very small net negative fiscal impacts (-\$90 per unit).

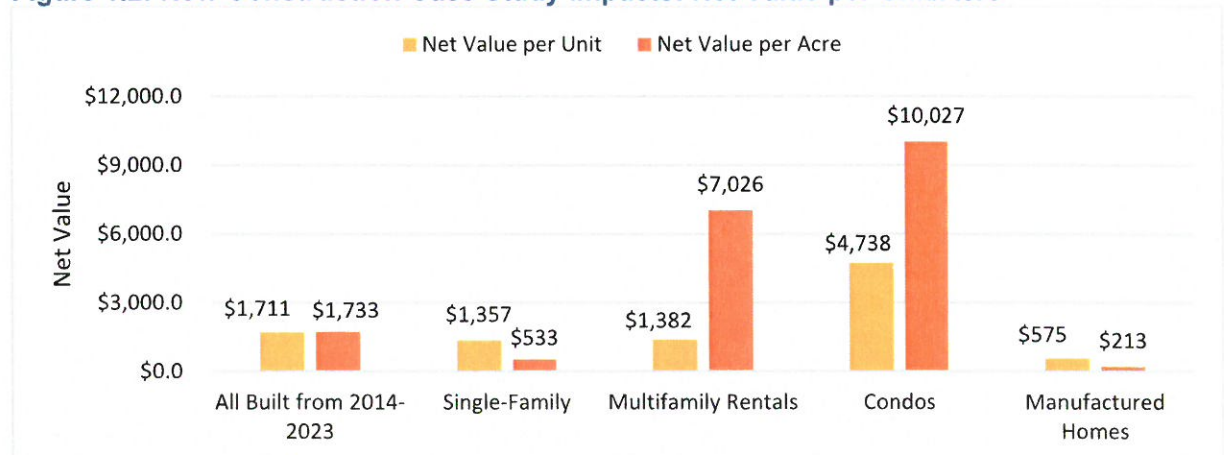
## Differences Among Case Study Communities

15. Two case study communities also had relatively small net negative fiscal impacts (Deerfield and Merrimack at -\$364 and -\$439, respectively).

**Figure 1.1: New Construction Case Study Impacts: Students per Unit**



**Figure 1.2: New Construction Case Study Impacts: Net Value per Unit/Acre**



Note: Net value refers to the overall fiscal impact of new housing on a school district, calculated as the difference between the additional tax revenue generated and the total cost of providing educational services to new students. It can be positive if revenue exceeds costs or negative if costs exceed revenue.

<sup>4</sup> Lower-cost housing refers to units that are no higher than 15% to 65% of the area median rent or sales price, depending on the location, type of unit and the year built. For rent and sales price thresholds used for identifying lower-cost and higher-cost housing units, please refer to Figure 8.4

## Net Value / Benefits

Net value or benefits refers to the overall fiscal impact of new housing on a school district, calculated as the difference between the additional tax revenue generated and the total costs of providing educational services to new students. It can be positive if revenue exceeds costs or negative if costs exceed revenue.

## Case Study Housing Designation Definitions

For the purposes of this study, we defined several housing types as follows, which may differ from other commonly used or official definitions:

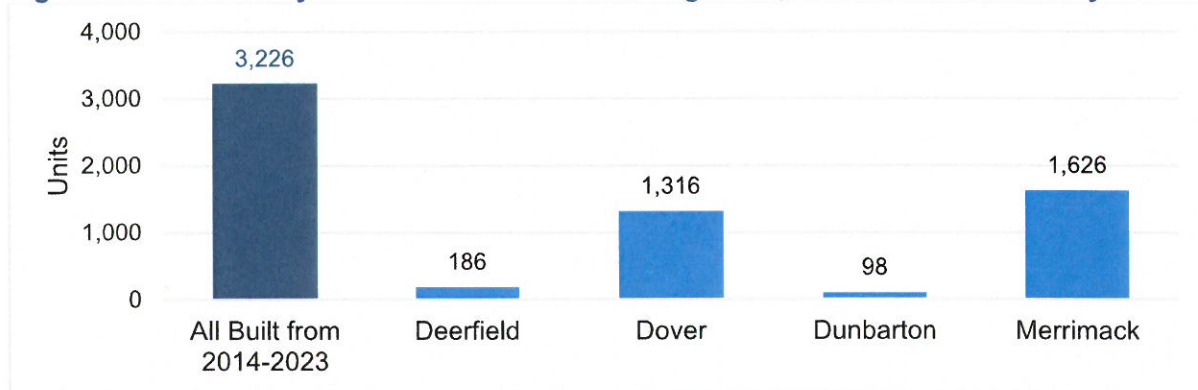
**Single-Family:** Stand-alone homes occupied by a single household

**Condos:** Shared buildings (includes townhomes, multifamily buildings) with individually owned units.

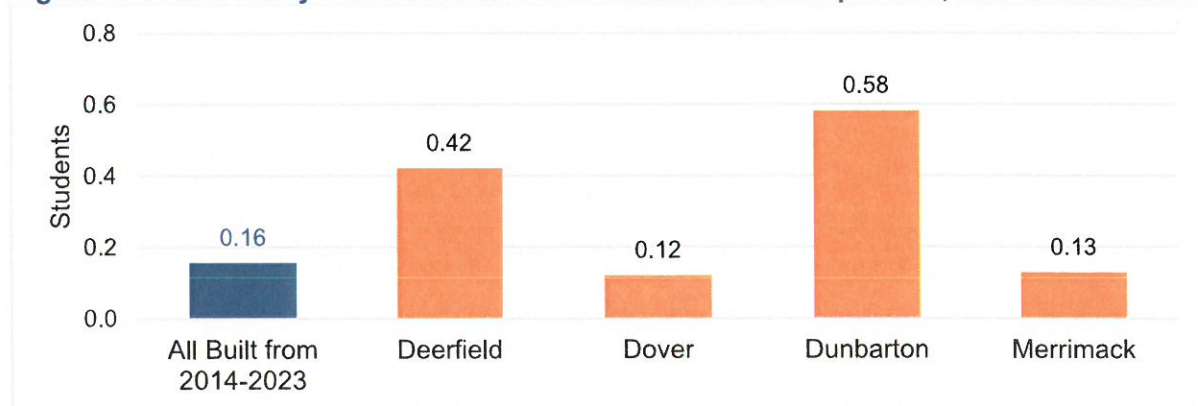
**Multifamily Rental:** Buildings with multiple rented units under single ownership.

**Manufactured Housing:** Factory-built stand-alone homes for single households, transported to sites (either moveable or permanent).

**Figure 1.3: Case Study Communities: Total Housing Units, New Construction Only**

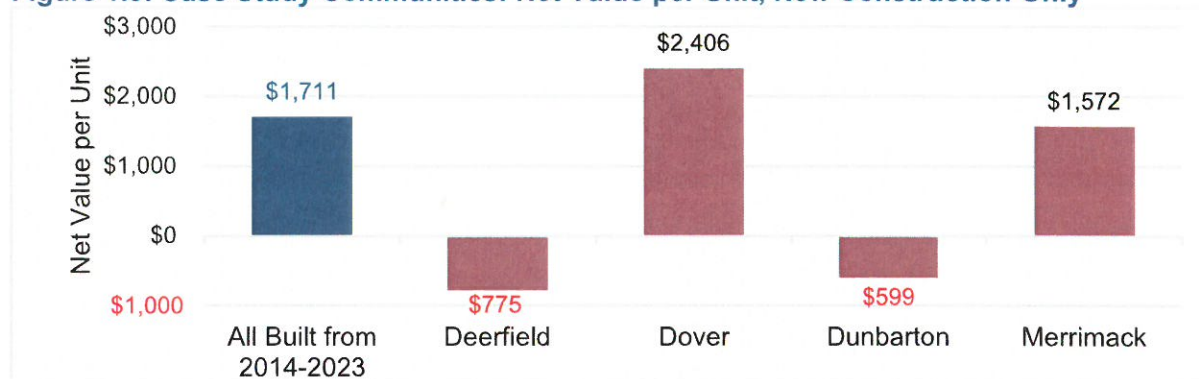


**Figure 1.4: Case Study Communities: Public School Students per Unit, New Construction Only**





**Figure 1.5: Case Study Communities: Net Value per Unit, New Construction Only**



Note: Net value refers to the overall fiscal impact of new housing on a school district, calculated as the difference between the additional tax revenue generated and the total cost of providing educational services to new students. It can be positive if revenue exceeds costs or negative if costs exceed revenue.

## Conclusions

A range of factors contribute to whether a housing unit will have a net positive fiscal impact. The detailed findings from this analysis (see Appendix B) show that:

- Under most circumstances new construction housing of all types and densities across a wide range of prices and community types have net positive impacts.
  - Both rental and condominium multifamily housing have greater net positive impacts than single family or manufactured homes.
- Housing that is most likely to generate the highest net positive impacts for school districts are those located in large communities with a sizeable commercial property sector.

**These findings are based on data from four communities and do not represent the entire state of New Hampshire.**

## Recommendations

Finally, this study provides recommendations to improve net value relative to new construction housing development. Key recommendations include:

1. Develop standard fiscal impact methodologies for planning decisions
2. Municipalities trying to control their tax burden should seek to diversify their tax base and encourage the construction of denser housing types, which are likely to yield more fiscal benefit.
3. Develop a state housing development gap fund to encourage the construction of lower-cost housing that meets identified state priorities.

To effectively navigate the intricate dynamics among housing development, school enrollment, and fiscal impacts, it is crucial to develop strong collaboration and knowledge sharing among a wide range of decision-makers. This includes planning board members, municipal staff, and other municipal and school district officials. Additionally, coordination among local and state offices is essential, focusing on efforts that encompass policy, planning, and community engagement.

By embracing the recommendations outlined in this report and incorporating additional evidence-based research while remaining attentive to evolving trends and challenges, New Hampshire can expand its housing supply and move towards a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous future for all its residents.



**FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS**

The Merrimack School District encourages off-site educational experiences that expand the school curriculum and that also educate the whole child. Such experiences are viewed as class time in another location. It is the responsibility of each Principal to assure that such student experiences are thoroughly planned in the interest and protection of the pupils involved and that the behavioral expectations are the same as in the classroom. Educational alternatives will be provided to students who do not attend a field trip.

The Principal and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will approve or disapprove any field trip request.

**Legal References:**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: September 9, 2024  
2<sup>nd</sup> Review: September 23, 2024  
3<sup>rd</sup> Review: October 7, 2024  
Adoption:

**FIELD TRIPS PROCEDURES****Academic Field Trips**

The Merrimack School Board recognizes that academic field trips are an extension of the classroom experience that expand and reinforce concepts learned in the classroom and provide new and unique experiences not available in the classroom setting. An academic field trip is defined as a visit to a location not on school grounds that have a direct relationship to a curricular field. There are two types of academic field trips: core curriculum trips that are an integral part of the curriculum, and enrichment curriculum trips that require teacher approval for student participation. An example of an enrichment curriculum trip is ~~international travel for language immersion. in a foreign an international country travel for language immersion.~~ Merrimack School District will sponsor academic field trips for students only when trips meet the following criteria:

**Curriculum Standards** - The learning activities associated with the field trip map to the curriculum standards and satisfy instructional hour requirements.

**Affordability/Accessibility Standards** - All core curriculum trips must be provided free of charge to all students. The Merrimack School District may request voluntary contributions from students and families to defray the cost of core curriculum field trips.

Enrichment curriculum trips should be affordable and accessible to all qualified and interested students. Students may be encouraged to participate in fund raising efforts to defer the cost of an enrichment trip.

**Educational Alternatives** - Students who cannot participate in core curriculum trips will receive educational alternatives that have related academic value.

**Health and Safety** - The health and safety of students and staff is given utmost consideration in the approval, planning and conduct of all school sponsored trips. Students participating in any type of field trip are required to adhere to general school rules and regulations.

**Supervision** - Staff from the requesting school direct the trip, and a staff member is identified as the Staff-in-Charge and is in attendance to ensure compliance with this policy.

**Non-Academic Field Trips**

A non-academic field trip is defined as attendance at contests or regional events outside the school grounds that is not a part of the curriculum and does not count toward meeting the instructional hour requirement. Every effort should be made to mitigate the effect of non-academic field trips on instructional hours.

A standard main office permission slip for school field trips, overnight, and overseas trips must be completed, signed, and submitted to the teacher and administration before the scheduled event. On all such trips, all school rules shall apply. All trips require a minimum of two chaperones along with administrative approval.



Parents/guardians are allowed to pick up their own child/student from field trips but must submit the [Alternate Field Trip Transportation Form](#) at least 24 hours prior to the event. If a parent would like their student to ride home with another parent, they would need to submit the [Alternate Field Trip Transportation Form](#) at least 24 hours prior to the event.

If parents/guardians provide transportation to, or allow another adult to provide transportation to, scheduled school field trips, the parent/guardian or designated adult transporting the students shall assume all resulting liability, and the school shall assume no liability. Under no circumstances will students transport themselves or other students to or from any school event.

### **Related Definitions**

Chaperone - A person, other than a teacher and instructional assistant, age 21 or older, who accompanies and supervises the students on a field trip.

Staff - All paid school personnel.

Staff-in-Charge - The teacher attending the trip designated to ensure compliance with this policy.

### **Approval Criteria**

The table below lists the terms used for trips of various lengths and the approval required. Note that out-of-state travel requires School Board approval regardless of the trip length. In no case will a trip exceeding five school days be approved.

<b>Trip Length</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Asst Supt for Curriculum</b>	<b>Supt</b>	<b>School Board</b>
<b>Day - Within the school day. *</b> <b>Academic</b> <b>Non-Academic</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Extended - A visit extending beyond the school day but not overnight.</b> <b>Academic</b> <b>Non-Academic</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Overnight - A visit that involves an overnight stay.</b> <b>Academic</b> <b>Non-Academic</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>
<b>Foreign International - A visit to another foreign country.</b> <b>Academic</b> <b>Non-Academic</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>	<b>X</b> <b>X</b>

\* All Academic field trips, longer than half of the school day, require the approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

X Approval is required by the indicated person.

## **Approval**

Approval for all trips requiring School Board approval must be received prior to the school year in which the trip is to take place and prior to making any final financial contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy.

The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

### **Documentation**

1. The purpose of the trip including a mapping to the curriculum frameworks.
2. Proposed dates.
3. Proposed itinerary.
4. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating.
5. Cost per student (if applicable).
6. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students.
7. Description of transportation arrangements.
8. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable).
9. Means of financing.
10. A draft copy of any contract associated with the trip.
11. A description of the educational alternative and mapping of that alternative for students not attending the trip.
12. A satisfactory criminal background check is required of all chaperones.
13. A description of the process that will be used to determine student eligibility. After the initial trip approval, subsequent approval documentation must include information detailing how the above trip conditions have changed since the initial trip was approved.

# MHS REQUEST FOR ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION *\*To be filled out by PARENT/GUARDIAN ONLY*

If parents/guardians provide transportation to, or allow another adult to provide transportation to scheduled school field trips, the parent/guardian or designated adult transporting the students shall assume all resulting liability, and the school shall assume no liability. Under no circumstances will students transport themselves or other students to or from any school event.

sandra.swanson@sau26.org [Switch account](#)



\* Indicates required question

Email \*

☐

Record **sandra.swanson@sau26.org** as the email to be included with my response

Parent/Guardian Name: \*

Your answer

Email: \*

Your answer

Student Name: \*

Your answer



Event Date \*

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

My child, named above, will not be riding the team bus to/from the event dated \*  
above because my child will be:

- ☐ Riding with their parent/guardian TO the event
- ☐ Riding with their parent/guardian FROM the event
- ☐ Riding with another designated adult TO the event - please type the name of the adult below
- ☐ Riding with another designated adult FROM the event - please type the name of the adult below

Name of Authorized Adult to Transport: \*

Your answer

Liability Waiver \*

- ☐ By checking this box, I agree that the designated driver assumes all liability absolving Merrimack School District of any liability

A copy of your responses will be emailed to [sandra.swanson@sau26.org](mailto:sandra.swanson@sau26.org).

Submit

Clear form

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.



This form was created inside of Merrimack School District. [Report Abuse](#)



**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY INSTRUCTION**

If the District receives federal funding for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Programs, the following will be provided:

1. Parents will be notified of their student's placement in a language program and their options associated with that placement. Notification will include the reasons for identifying the child as LEP and the reasons for placing the child in the specific program.
2. Student will participate in regular assessments in a manner that will yield an accurate assessment. Test waivers may be granted on a case-by-case basis for LEP students who demonstrate unusual and unique circumstances; however, students who have been educated in the United States for three years are required to participate in reading/language arts assessment in English.
3. ~~Certification that teachers in the program are fluent in English as well as other languages used in instruction (if the district receives sub-grants).~~ Teachers within the program are certified to teach bilingual or multilingual education
4. Evaluation of the program and the academic success and language achievement of the students in the program. Parents will be notified of:
  - A. Their child's level of English proficiency and how such level was assessed.
  - B. The status of their child's academic achievement.
  - C. The method of instruction used in the program in which the child is placed, and the methods of instruction used in other available programs.
  - D. Information as to how the program will meet their child's educational strengths, assist him/her to learn English, and meet age-appropriate academic achievement standards.
  - E. Exit requirements for the program.
  - F. If the child has a disability, a statement as to how the LEP will meet objectives of the child's IEP.

**Legal Reference:**

P.L. 107-110, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: January 7, 2008

2<sup>nd</sup> Review: January 28, 2008

Adoption: February 4, 2008

Revised:

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
September 23, 2024**

---

**Present:** Ms. Lori Peters, Chair; Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member; Mr. Ken Martin, Board Member; and Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member.

Also present were Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer; Ms. Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

**Not Present:** Vice-Chair Hardy – Excused

**1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

At 6:00 p.m., Chair Peters called the regular meeting to order.

**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were none.

**3. RECOGNITIONS**

- Matthew Brown

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that Matthew Brown, a student, produced legislation when he was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade that would add an eating disorder helpline to the back of student identifications. He said House Bill 1109 had been enacted into law and was known as the “Matthew Brown Act.”

Ms. Rosemarie Rung, State Representative, was present and invited Matthew to join her at the front of the room. She said she was not only extremely impressed with Matthew’s mission statement but added that a large number of people learned a lot.

Ms. Rung presented Matthew with the actual signed statute.

On behalf of the School Board and the Merrimack School District, Chair Peters presented Matthew with a certificate.

**4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**

- a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the following:

- Merrimack School District received a Robotics Grant for \$11,500.
- The classes of 2025 and 2026 were having a mattress sale on 10/6/24 beginning at 10:00 a.m.



- The NH Music Educators Association had put together an All-State Modern Band, and out of twelve students that were selected from the entire state, four were from Merrimack. The concert is to be held on Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, at the Sheraton in Nashua, NH, at 4:00 p.m.
- “Scooter,” who was a comfort dog, had already begun helping some students at the high school.
- Thorntons Ferry Elementary School has two new Gaga Pits as well as the addition of (ADA) Americans with Disabilities compliant tables and seating.
- Thorntons Ferry Elementary School also received a school grant of \$6,000 to continue their work on the hydroponic garden.
- Congratulated Brooke Ross, Assistant Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, for being accepted into a doctoral program.
- The School Resource Officer, Bill Vandersyde, and the Merrimack Police Department had provided outstanding training to the staff.
- The Unified Arts Teachers began their extension classes at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Congratulated Colby Wygant, a 1st-grade teacher at the James Masticola Elementary School, for receiving the Best Ford “Best Teacher Award.”
- Liz Dumais, Merrimack High School, had been selected to participate in a Navy League Educators at Sea aboard the Merrimack-based Navy Aircraft Carrier in the fall.
- Fall sports were off to a great start.
- The soccer team would take part in the Hampshire Tackle Soccer Initiative.
- The online store at the Merrimack High School store was open.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that since the School Board’s last meeting, an additional professional development day was held where they continued to work on the implementation of new programs and were making progress on many of the district’s initiatives. She said she was currently working on the schedule of activities for the early release days, which would include a combination of mandatory training on bullying, suicide prevention, and students who are experiencing homelessness. She said there would also be some presentations from experts on supporting multi-lingual learners and continuing to

98 develop cultural proficiency. She added that they would also have some time to look at an  
99 adaptation of unification training and crisis management with the Merrimack Police  
100 Department.

101  
102 Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said Bonnie Painchaud, Principal, Reeds Ferry  
103 Elementary School, Chief Educational Officer Olsen, and herself met with Chuck Mower and  
104 John Lastowka from the Merrimack Historical Society about a partnership. She said they  
105 were actively working with Susan Fineman, who worked with a national organization on one-  
106 room schools to bring a living history experience to the schoolhouse at #12 on Post Road.  
107 She said it worked perfectly with the district's 4<sup>th</sup>-grade curriculum.

108  
109 Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle shared that Sara Parrotto, Director of K-8  
110 School Counselor, was working on a second year of Promising Futures money.

111  
112 c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

113  
114 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said they were starting the process of  
115 developing the budget. He said the amount of surplus had decreased. He added that the  
116 grant money received had not increased in 25 years.

117  
118 d. School Board Update

119  
120 Chair Peters commented that she had attended the Merrimack High School's FIRST Robotics  
121 Competition, Mayhem in Merrimack, and it was an exciting start to their season.

122  
123 Chair Peters also pointed out that item (a.) Review of New Hampshire School Board  
124 Resolutions under Old Business would be placed on the next meeting's agenda so that Vice-  
125 Chair Hardy would be present.

126  
127 Chair Peters said that she would be visiting the Merrimack Middle School the following week  
128 and looked forward to sharing how that visit went with the School Board at a future meeting.

129  
130 **5. NEW BUSINESS**

131  
132 a. Middle School Lunch

133  
134 Chair Peters stated she attended all three lunch periods at the Merrimack Middle School, and  
135 her observations were that overall, everything ran like clockwork. She said the longest time  
136 it took the last student in line to get their food was three minutes. She added that 95% of the  
137 students were finished eating with five to seven minutes to spare. She said any student who  
138 was not finished eating was allowed to finish their lunch with a teacher sitting with them. Chair  
139 Peters said she had noticed that some students liked to "chat" a lot and some students who  
140 were slow eaters. She added that the lunchroom was very clean. Chair Peters also said she  
141 would return the following week to take a second look.

142  
143 Chair Peters added that after speaking with a few teachers, she learned that the shorter time  
144 period helped to curtail potential behavioral issues.

146 b. Directory Information

147  
148 Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the School Board had a copy of his memorandum  
149 regarding "Directory Information," which included the following:  
150

- 151 • Name and address of a student
- 152 • Field of study
- 153 • Weight and height of athletes
- 154 • Most recent previous school attended
- 155 • Date and place of birth
- 156 • Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- 157 • Date of attendance, degree, and awards

158 Chief Educational Officer Olsen said he recently sent a notice to parents informing them of their  
159 right to refuse disclosure of the Directory Information as defined under the Federal Education  
160 Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and reiterated through the New Hampshire RSA 189:1-e.  
161

162 Chief Educational Officer Olsen said some parents had inquired as to who might request the  
163 information specific to a student(s). He said a request for Directory Information could possibly  
164 come from:  
165

- 166 • Vendors selling school rings and photos for yearbooks.
- 167 • Educational tutoring services.
- 168 • College recruiters.
- 169 • Military recruiters.
- 170 • Public records request.

171 Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that the district received very few requests for such  
172 information, and they would never disclose non-directory information such as a student's  
173 social security number or a student identification number. He added that parents had the  
174 right to decline their student(s) information being shared.  
175

176 c. Student Enrollments

177  
178 Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the current enrollment was about 64 students  
179 compared to the previous year. He said enrollments in grades Pre-K through grade 4 were down  
180 by 28 students; in grades 5 & 6, enrollments were up by 26 students; in grades 7 & 8, enrollments  
181 were down by 30 students; in grades 9 through 12, enrollments were down by 32 students, the  
182 out-of-district placements were up by 2, and home-schooled students were up by 10.  
183

184 d. School Board Goals

185  
186 Chair Peters reviewed a PowerPoint presentation as summarized below:  
187

188 Mission Statement

189  
190 The Merrimack School District will provide a high-quality, future-driven education to all  
191 students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both  
192 rigor and relevance, along with meeting their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The  
193 District will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and

194 technological challenges in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage  
195 students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, and dedicated individuals who are  
196 lifelong, expert learners; Merrimack graduates exercise judgment, are innovative, and  
197 become responsible, contributing members of society.  
198

199 Chair Peters reviewed the goals from the 2023 – 2024 school year:  
200

- 201 1. Create an engaged, inclusive, and collaborative district culture built of mutual trust  
202 and respect (this goal is a continuation of the goal developed from 2022-2023).  
203
- 204 2. The Pathways to Graduation (this goal was further developed from last year)  
205
- 206 3. Improve our learning outcomes by ensuring our instruction is responsive to  
207 the varied needs of our student population (this goal was further developed  
208 from last year)  
209
- 210 4. Have facilities and equipment that are safe, secure, clean, healthy, current,  
211 and appropriate for meeting the educational needs of students and staff (this  
212 goal was further developed from last year)  
213
- 214 5. Create a dynamic relationship between the school district and community  
215 through clear and consistent communication (new goal identified in 2023-2024)

216 Chair Peters reviewed the goals for the 2024 – 2025 school year:  
217

- 218 1. Communication  
219
  - 220 • Create a dynamic relationship between the District and the Community  
221 through clear and consistent communication.  
222
- 223 2. Student Services  
224
  - 225 • Provide responsive programs, instruction, and systems of support that  
226 engage all students with opportunities and pathways that effectively meet  
227 their needs, support academic, social, and emotional growth, and enable  
228 the pursuit of individual passions and interests.  
229
- 230 3. Merrimack High School  
231
  - 232 • Collaborate with the high school administration and staff on a study with  
233 the goal of outlining the resources needed to make MHS a flagship school  
234 of New Hampshire.  
235
- 236 4. Mission and Vision  
237
  - 238 • Ensure that the District's Mission and Vision of a Graduate become the  
239 central frameworks for our collective work across the District.

240 5. Important Building Need

- 241
- 242 • Work with the Community to communicate the importance of building a
  - 243 new multifunctional, welcoming, and accessible SAU unit.
- 244

245 Chair Peters said that all of the School Board goals aligned with the three-year strategic plan.

246

247 Board Member Rothhaus commented that she would like to have the mission statement

248 displayed at the SAU and in the meeting rooms. She also said it would be helpful to have

249 Merrimack TV display the mission statement prior to every School Board meeting.

250

251 Board Member Halter commented that she felt some of the goals would become things that

252 were done on a daily basis and just part of the culture.

253

254 Board Member Martin also said the mission statement should be posted wherever possible.

255

256 e. Revised Service Learning Project (SLP)

257

258 Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that a few years prior, he had begun to have some

259 conversations with the staff and leadership team about the Service Learning Project, for which

260 a sum of money was budgeted in the collective bargaining agreement. He said there was a

261 set of guidelines that were drafted, but he felt it had strayed a little bit from its original intent,

262 and they were beginning to fund a number of activities that he considered co-curricular in

263 nature, which was not the initial intent. He further said that the intent of the program, as

264 indicated in the collective bargaining agreement, was to allow individual, certified teachers to

265 receive training to meet the needs of the school district, as determined by the Superintendent

266 or his/her designee. Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they restructured the program and

267 guidelines with the intent of supporting the instructional program, addressing the School

268 Board goals, and assisting in the accomplishment of one or more initiatives in the district's

269 strategic plan, as well as representing evidence-based educational and best practices.

270

271 Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they had refocused it on activities such as professional

272 learning teams, mentor programs, domestic & international overnight field trips, etc.

273

274 **MOTION:** Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the Revised Service Learning

275 Project guidelines, as presented. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

276

277 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

278

279 f. Approval of MES, RFS, TFS, and JMUES Parent/Student Handbooks

280

281 Chief Educational Officer Olsen said legal counsel had vetted the handbooks, and the new

282 Title IX regulations had been incorporated into all of the handbooks. He said the handbooks

283 would be reviewed every year.

284

285 Board Member Rothhaus commented that she hoped that the handbooks would be ready in

286 August of the following year. She added that she felt all elementary schools should be

287 consistent with the celebrations, such as birthdays. She noted that all but one school allowed

288 children to bring in food to celebrate the student's birthdays.

289

Board Member Halter commented that she was relieved that she did not have to send in items for her child's birthday but said she agreed it should be consistent across all of the schools.

Board Member Martin commented that some homes had food scarcity, and that would be difficult for them, not to mention the number of children with different allergies.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said he would review the matter of consistency and get back to the Board.

Board Member Rothhaus suggested putting together a "Sunshine Committee" that would fundraise for students in need.

Board Member Halter commented that she felt the graphic of "The Vision of a Learner" should be included in the handbooks. She also said that the handbooks looked much better than they had in the past.

Board Member Halter also suggested that the bus routes should be included in the handbooks.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen took a moment to thank Sandy Swanson, his Administrative Assistant, for all of the hard work she put into working on the handbooks.

Board Member Martin suggested that it may be a good idea to have parents sign "a contract" acknowledging that they received and read the handbook. Board Member Halter stated that there was a signature line that had to be signed online.

**MOTION:** Board Member Martin made a motion to approve the James Mastricola Elementary School, the Reeds Ferry Elementary School, the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, and the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School's handbooks, as amended. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

g. Other

Board Member Rothhaus commented that Saint Anselm's College would be offering free tuition the following year for students who were residents of the State of New Hampshire and had a GPA of at least 3.2, and the family's income had to be under \$100,000 per year.

Board Member Rothhaus asked if the topic of a "Sunshine Fund" could be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

## **6. POLICIES**

a. Field Trip and Excursion Policy (IJOA) and Field Trip and Excursion Procedures (IJOA-R) 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he was waiting on some information from the high school staff regarding students who usually took the bus but wanted to leave with a family member or friend. He said he would bring that information to the next Schol Board meeting.



340  
341 **7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
342

- 343 a. September 9, 2024 – Public and Non-Public Minutes

344 **MOTION:** Board Member Halter made a motion to accept the public and non-public minutes  
345 from the September 9, 2024, public and non-public minutes, as presented. Board Member  
346 Rothhaus seconded the motion.

347  
348 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**  
349

350 **8. CONSENT AGENDA**  
351

- 352 a. Teacher Nominations

- 353  
354 o Megan Reynolds, Elementary Classroom Teacher Reeds Ferry  
355

356 **MOTION:** Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.  
357 Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

358  
359 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**  
360

361 **9. OTHER**  
362

- 363 a. Committee Reports

364  
365 Board Member Rothhaus commented that she had attended the Parks & Recreation  
366 Committee meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup>, where they discussed ensuring all of the parks were  
367 safe, they continued to search for an Assistant Director, there was an Eagle Scout  
368 presentation, and the Halloween party would be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>. She said they were  
369 having a logo contest for the Parks & Recreation Department and thought it would be great  
370 for students to send in their artwork.

371  
372 Board Member Martin shared that he attended the school year's first Professional  
373 Development Committee meeting, where they discussed looking for some new members to  
374 join the committee and the approval of professional development that staff had completed  
375 over the summer months.

- 376  
377 b. Correspondence

378 Chair Peters commented that she and members of the Board had received multiple emails  
379 regarding special education, lunch periods at the Merrimack Middle School, and a number of  
380 conversations about the curriculum, many of which she referred to Assistant Superintendent  
381 of Curriculum Doyle.

- 382  
383 c. Comments

384 Board Member Rothhaus sent out a reminder that the "Merrimack Forum" was not the way to  
385 contact the Board and that all messages should be sent to their email addresses.  
386

387 Chair Peters noted that serious concerns should be sent to the Board Member's official emails  
388 and not by text.

389  
390 Board Member Martin stated the Modern Band All-State was new, but the fact that four  
391 students from Merrimack were a part of it was very impressive.

392  
393 Chair Peters thanked all of those who participated in the fundraiser over the weekend for field  
394 hockey, soccer, and basketball.

395  
396 **10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

397 Ms. Heather Robitaille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and congratulated  
398 Matthew Brown for his contribution to the new legislation regarding eating disorders.

399  
400 Ms. Robitaille asked if Chair Peters' presentation regarding the School Board Goals could be  
401 made available to the public.

402  
403 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

404 **MOTION:** At approximately 7:48 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn.  
405 Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

406  
407 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**  
408